2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

He will consult the diviner again at the beginning of the confinement and before the child is named. The father will also buy 'medicines' to facilitate the birth and buy or collect herbs with which to prepare the new-born's first food. During the delivery itself the father keeps away, leaving the scene to his elder sister, mother or aunt, and to his father or father's brother, who is called in to cut the umbilical cord and dispose of the afterbirth (which is buried outside the hut). Even afterwards the infant's grandfather plays a more conspicuous part than does the father; while the latter goes quietly about his business, the grandfather loudly announces to all friends and visitors that a grandchild has been born to him, and it is to him that all congratulations are addressed. The delivery and the treatment of the new-born represent essentially practical procedures devoid of ceremonial. We may mention only that for four days the infant is fed on a boiled infusion of the herbs which the father has collected and given the mother's milk only on the fifth. On the same day the father sends gifts of kolanuts to all relatives and friends, with the announcement that the naming ceremony, meanwhile fixed, will take place on such-and-such a day.

This ceremony, known as *suna* ('name'), usually takes place eight days after the birth, and is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be re-born in the child. The ceremonial is brief and takes place in privacy, usually in the hut where the reincarnated ancestor lies buried, being attended only by the child's father and his nearest male relations. The father kneels down, a gourd with beer in his hand, and speaks this prayer (to quote a concrete instance):

'I am praying to *Sokó*. The child that has entered, Lord God, it is Landu returned (the grandfather's name). *Kuci*, hold him (the child) securely, do not permit that he falls sick. May he live, cause him to grow old'.

The ceremonial ends when beer is poured on the ground and the rest drunk in silence by the men present. As this brief ritual summarizes the whole conception of reincarnation, so it also betrays its ambiguity; for the *kuci* which is believed to have returned to the living is yet asked to take care of the living; and though one sacrifices to a particular ancestor, one yet invokes God.

The naming ceremony itself makes no further mention of these mystic notions, being concerned exclusively with formally announcing the name and identity of the new-born. This is done before a gathering of guests as large as the host can make it. The guests are relatives, friends, neighbours, and such important personages as the child's father may happen to know; they are expected to bring small gifts and will in turn be furnished with

CULTURAL FEATURES AND THE LIFE CYCLE

Physical Characteristics: Tribal Marks: Dress

142 While the aboriginal Nupe sub-tribes (Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, and Bataci) are negro in appearance, there are indications of considerable non-negro elements in their ancestry. A striking type with oval face, high cheekbones, and slightly mongoloid eyes is often found among those of mixed Fulani descent.

181 The Nupe are known all over Nigeria as an industrious and formerly warlike people. They are progressive and anxious to try new methods, e.g., in agriculture. The women are keen and successful traders.

634 304 There are no facial marks common to the Nupe people as a whole, but sub-tribes are distinguished to some extent. Many sub-tribes have to-day adopted "Bida" marks in addition to their own.

291 565 Commoners wear a loincloth, with a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder and the blue phrygian cap, said to be the traditional headgear of the Nupe. Nobles and other well-to-do men wear trousers and a flowing white robe and turban.[1]

Birth

843 The rituals surrounding childbirth begin at the time of conception and culminate in the naming ceremony. As soon as the pregnancy becomes noticeable (generally in the third to the fifth month) the parents must discontinue sexual relations and the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits and abstain from eating certain foods which are thought to have a harmful effect on the unborn child. Special rules or avoidances may be prescribed by the diviner whom the father will consult immediately, and again at the beginning of the confinement and before the naming ceremony.

844 The father keeps away during the actual birth, his elder sister, mother, or other kinswoman assisting the mother, and his father or father's brother cutting the 851 umbilical cord and disposing of the afterbirth, which is buried outside the hut. Thereafter the child's paternal grandfather plays a more important part than the father, announcing the birth of his grandchild and receiving congratulations.

553 The naming ceremony (*suna*) usually takes place eight days after the birth. 852 It is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be reborn in the child. The name used always to be announced by the child's grandfather before a group of relatives, without any particular ceremonial. To-day, however, with the spread of Islam, the announcement is usually made by a mallam. It is at this time also that the child's hair is cut and the tribal marks scratched on the cheeks and forehead.[2]

845 Twins are generally welcomed, but infants born with teeth are regarded as a bad omen.[3]

Circumcision

304 Circumcision (*zuŋ'ba*) is universal, but it does not appear to be regarded as one of the more important rituals. It is performed on boys individually between the ages of 8 and 11, whenever the father thinks fit, by a barber, who is usually paid sixpence or a shilling. Women must be away from the house when it is done, otherwise there is no ceremonial.[4]

No corresponding ceremony is reported for girls.

[1] Nadel, op cit., pp. 25, 237, 362, 405–6 (sketches of tribal marks); Meek, I, 1925, pp. 28–9; Line, 1947.
[2] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 115–18.
[3] Nadel, personal communication; Malam Aliyu Bida, Ms. Notes.
[4] Nadel, op cit., p. 116.